

Public Affairs Support Annex

Coordinating Agency:

Department of Homeland Security

Cooperating Agencies:

All

Introduction

Purpose

This Public Affairs Support Annex describes the interagency policies and procedures used to rapidly mobilize Federal assets to prepare and deliver coordinated and sustained messages to the public in response to Incidents of National Significance and other major domestic emergencies.

Scope

As part of the Secretary of Homeland Security's responsibility to coordinate incident management under Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5, the National Response Plan Incident Communications Emergency Policy and Procedures (NRP-ICEPP) provides detailed guidance to Federal incident communicators on activities to be initiated in conjunction with potential or actual Incidents of National Significance. It is applicable to all Federal departments and agencies responding under the NRP. It establishes mechanisms to prepare and deliver coordinated and sustained messages regarding potential or actual Incidents of National Significance and provides for prompt Federal acknowledgement of an incident and communication of emergency information to the public during incident management operations.

The NRP-ICEPP is comprised of two components of the NRP: the Public Affairs Support Annex, which describes the interagency policies and procedures for incident and communications with the public, and the ESF #15 – External Affairs Annex, which outlines resources and capabilities for public affairs. The NRP-ICEPP is supported by the NRP Incident Communications Emergency Supplement (NRP-ICES). The NRP-ICES contains supporting guidance and instructions for incident communications with the public and is distributed on a limited basis to core-group Federal departments and agencies.

The policies and procedures outlined in these documents are based on, and flow through, the NRP, the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the Joint Information System (JIS), and the Incident Command System (ICS). All of these elements are integrated with and supported through the ESF #15 resource management structure.

Policies

The NRP institutes an integrated concept, termed “incident communications,” as the approach used to manage communications with the public during Incidents of National Significance. Incident communications incorporates the following processes:

- **Control:** Identification of incident communications coordinating, primary and supporting departments and agency roles, and authorities for release of information.
- **Coordination:** Specification of interagency coordination and plans, notification, activation, and supporting protocols.
- **Communications:** Development of message content such as incident facts, health risk concerns, pre-incident and post-incident preparedness recommendations, warning issues, incident information, messages, audiences, and strategies for when, where, how, and by whom the messages will be delivered.

General guidance on the authority to release information is in accordance with existing plans, operational security, law enforcement protocols, designated coordinating and primary agency assignments, and current procedures.

Nothing in this annex limits the authority of State, local, and tribal authorities from releasing information regarding an incident under their jurisdiction, particularly if it involves immediate health and safety issues. State, local, and tribal authorities retain the primary responsibility for communicating health and safety instructions for their citizens.

Integration and teamwork among Federal, State, local, and tribal authorities is essential. State, local, and tribal authorities are encouraged to contact Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Public Affairs as they release initial or follow-on information. DHS Public Affairs engages with State, local, and tribal authorities as soon as possible during an actual or potential incident to synchronize overall incident communications to the public.

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## Concept of Operations

### General

- During an incident, Federal, State, local, and tribal authorities share responsibility for communicating information regarding the incident to the public. These actions are a critical component of incident management and must be fully integrated with all other operational actions to ensure the following objectives are met:
  - Delivery of incident preparedness, health, response, and recovery instructions to those directly affected by the incident; and
  - Dissemination of incident information to the general public.
- The Joint Information Center (JIC) structure provides a supporting mechanism to develop, coordinate, and deliver messages; it supports the Incident Commander or Unified Command and the associated elements of the ICS.
- A Federal core group develops, coordinates, and delivers information and instructions to the public related to:
  - Federal assistance to the incident-affected area;
  - Federal departmental/agency response;
  - National preparations;
  - Protective measures;
  - Impact on nonaffected areas; and
  - Federal law enforcement activities.

Assignments to this core group are determined by the DHS Office of Public Affairs (OPA) in

accordance with jurisdictional and statutory responsibilities, operational tasks, areas of expertise and responsibility, and the nature and location of the incident.

- The DHS OPA has primary responsibility for coordinating the Federal incident communications effort by:
  - Identifying the Federal department and agency participants in the core group, and arranging conference calls and other activities necessary for coordination;
  - Providing a leadership role during domestic incidents when significant interagency coordination is required; and
  - Providing coordination with the Homeland Security Council (HSC) and other entities within the Executive Office of the President on matters related to dissemination of incident-related information to the public.

### Communications Team

The Federal Government operates as a team to ensure successful incident communications with the public. From initial notifications to final recovery actions, the Federal team must operate and speak with a unified voice and consistent message that is coordinated not only with the different Federal authorities involved in an incident, but also with affected State, local, and tribal authorities. The organizational approach for public affairs and incident communications with the public relies on the following organizations and positions:

**Core Group of Federal Agencies:** At the Federal level, incident messages are developed, coordinated, and delivered by an interagency core group of the key departments and agencies involved in the incident.

**Joint Information Center:** A JIC is a central point for coordination of incident information, public affairs activities, and media access to information regarding the latest developments. In the event of a potential or actual Incident of National Significance, JICs are established to coordinate Federal, State, local, tribal, and private-sector incident communications with the public. Major announcements, daily briefings, and incident updates from the JIC are coordinated through DHS Public Affairs, affected State, local, and tribal leadership, and the interagency core group prior to release. This must be closely assessed and agreed upon in the early stages of an incident by all involved in incident communications with the public.

- **National JIC:** Initially, a virtual JIC is established to coordinate information among affected States, Federal departments, and agencies. If necessary, a National JIC may be established. If established, Federal departments and agencies may be requested to provide representatives to the National JIC. A National JIC may be used when an Incident of National Significance is expected to be of a long duration (i.e., weeks or months) and when the incident affects a large area(s) of the country.
- **Incident JIC:** The incident JIC is the physical location from which public affairs professionals from organizations involved in the response work together to provide critical emergency information, media response, and public affairs functions. The JIC serves as a focal point for the coordination and dissemination of information to the public and media concerning incident prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. The JIC may be established at an on-scene location in coordination with State, local, and tribal agencies depending on the requirements of the incident. In most cases, the JIC is established at or is virtually connected to the Joint Field Office (JFO), under the coordination of DHS Public Affairs.

- **JIC Staffing Components:** JIC organization and staffing components are based on the template established in the NIMS.
- **JIC Information Management:** The JIC develops, coordinates, and disseminates unified information. Information issued by the JIC is cleared internally through the JFO Coordination Group to ensure consistency. This formal approval process ensures protection of law enforcement-sensitive information.
- **Multiple JICs:** Procedures and processes specified in the NIMS and the NRP-ICEPP should be employed whenever multiple JICs are operating in support of the same or related incidents and jurisdictions. This ensures mutual awareness and consistency in messaging and public instructions between all participants.

**DHS Principal Federal Official (PFO) Public Affairs Director:** The PFO is supported by a dedicated DHS Public Affairs Director who functions as the press secretary, coordinates media activities for the PFO, provides strategic communications guidance to the JIC, and serves as a designated Federal spokesperson when directed by the PFO and/or DHS Public Affairs.

The organizational approach for public affairs and incident communications with the public also includes the following systems:

- **Virtual JIC:** A virtual JIC links all participants through technological means (secure or nonsecure) when geographical restrictions, incident management requirements, and other limitations preclude physical attendance by public affairs leadership at a central location.
- **National Incident Communications Conference Line (NICCL):** The NICCL is a standing conference line designated, maintained, and supported by DHS Public Affairs as the primary means for interagency incident communications information-sharing during an Incident of National Significance. DHS Public

Affairs provides guidance to Federal interagency public affairs headquarters staffs through the NICCL.

- **Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN):** HSIN provides the incident communications team with an encrypted online Web system for record communications, chat room capability, and a real-time capability to post and review documents. The HSIN also is used by the DHS Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC) to coordinate homeland security operations with interagency participants. DHS Public Affairs manages access, account support, and administrative issues relating to the HSIN for public affairs coordination.
- **Connectivity and Operations Center Support:** In the event that normal communications are lost or degraded, the core group communicates with DHS Public Affairs through respective Federal, State, local, and tribal emergency operations and command centers. The HSOC provides support for this task. Department and agency incident communications continuity of operations (COOP) plans should incorporate relocation and alternate operating location provisions.

## Managing Incident Communications

When an actual or potential Incident of National Significance occurs, Federal participants must immediately work together to manage incident communications with the public. This section describes incident communications control processes that delineate primary roles, primary agency functional areas, and authority for release of information.

**Initial Actions:** The HSOC Senior Watch Officer and the DHS Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (AS/PA) have specific responsibilities for immediate actions in the event of an incident. These include:

- **Incident of National Significance:** The HSOC Senior Watch Officer notifies the DHS AS/PA, who in turn directs implementation of the NRP-ICEPP and immediate public affairs staffing support to the Interagency Incident Management Group (IIMG).

- **Other Domestic Incidents:** The NRP-ICEPP may be implemented by the DHS AS/PA for other domestic emergencies where enhanced incident control, coordination, and communications among participating Federal departments and agencies are necessary. The DHS AS/PA advises the HSOC prior to implementation of the NRP-ICEPP for other major emergency situations.

**Assignments:** Upon activation of the NRP, DHS Public Affairs coordinates the Federal activities related to incident communications with the public. Departments, agencies, and other authorities may retain primary incident communications responsibility for specific tasks. Primary assignments are confirmed during initial conference calls and may include the following:

- Incident management
- Law enforcement
- Medical or health
- Family assistance and victim issues
- Technical or forensic matters
- Environmental
- Protective measures
- Search and rescue
- Preparedness
- Recovery assistance
- Federal personnel management

**Core Group Participants:** Public affairs core group participation is flexible and scalable, depending on the nature and scope of the incident. As appropriate, the public affairs core group may consist of representatives from the following: the White House, DHS, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy (DOE), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Department of the Interior, the Department of Justice/Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Department of Transportation, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the Office of Personnel Management, the U.S. Postal Service, and the American Red Cross.

**Initial Coordination:** Establishing communications paths with participants is a primary objective during the first minutes of plan activation. These paths provide a streamlined process to ensure that appropriate participants and decisionmakers are linked together (by virtual or other means) to manage incident communications with the public. DHS Public Affairs establishes communications paths to enable the following:

- **Headquarters Level:** Consultation with White House Communications; consultation with DHS senior leadership, including the IIMG and HSOC.
- **Interagency Level:** Consultation with the Federal interagency core group. The NICCL is activated and used to communicate with the interagency core group. State, local, tribal, and nongovernmental organizations may be included in the NICCL as required. Interagency core group participants are designated and a virtual headquarters-level JIC assesses control, coordination, and communications issues for incident communications with the public. The initial conference assesses and assigns primary agency roles and reaches agreement on releases, talking points, and sustaining communications effort and strategy.
- **Incident Site:** When an incident occurs within their jurisdiction, State, local, and tribal authorities take the lead to communicate public information regarding the incident. DHS Public Affairs makes every attempt to establish contact with the incident site(s) and participating Federal, State, local, and tribal communicators to gain incident facts, operational response updates, media coverage, and messages under consideration or already delivered.
- **News Media:** Contact with key news media to inform them about the incident and its status, provide initial information to counter speculation and rumors, and make available, where necessary or known, immediate health and safety guidance. Departments and agencies should closely coordinate media queries during this critical phase to ensure that the approved interagency plan is being executed.

**Sustaining Coordination:** Leadership for incident communications with the public uses the JIS and incident communications processes to organize and operate a sustained, integrated, and coordinated strategy ensuring the delivery of timely, accurate, and consistent information to the public. Resources for these activities are provided through ESF #15. This sustained coordination effort includes Federal, State, local, tribal, and nongovernmental entities involved with incident communications with the public. DHS Public Affairs coordinates department and independent agency headquarters-level incident communications with the public as necessary throughout the incident, focusing on both the incident locale and nonaffected areas to ensure continuity and synchronization between the Federal, State, local, and tribal incident communications teams.

### **Actions Supporting Incident Communications With the Public**

Actions supporting incident communications with the public are keyed to the major components of incident management and incorporate special considerations as appropriate to the specific circumstances associated with the incident. Phasing of incident communications actions and special considerations that relate to incident communications with the public are detailed in the following subsections.

#### **Actions Relating to Incident Management Components**

- **Prevention:** Prevention measures are coordinated between DHS and FBI to ensure that a unified message is delivered to the public. Prevention incident communications with the public include:
  - Public information detailing changes in the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS) status level;
  - Public information describing protective measures;
  - Requests by law enforcement authorities for public assistance, information, and cooperation; and

- Public information describing homeland security threats.
- **Preparedness:** Preparedness for incident communications activities includes those measures taken before an incident to prepare for or mitigate the effects. Preparedness as it relates to incident communications with the public includes:
  - Evacuation, warning, or precautionary information to ensure public safety and health;
  - Public education and supporting documentation;
  - Federal, State, local, and tribal incident communications;
  - Media education, including weapons of mass destruction (WMD) information;
  - Exercises and training with risk communications;
  - Identifying subject-matter experts for availability during an incident;
  - Preparation and readiness to develop and deploy public service announcements and health advisory information; and
  - Testing and coordination of emergency broadcast and alerting systems.
- **Response:** Response processes mitigate the effects of unanticipated problems and facilitate orderly management of an incident. Response activities for incident communications with the public include:
  - Rapid mobilization of incident communications resources to prepare and deliver coordinated and sustained messages according to a well planned strategy. DHS Public Affairs coordinates the Federal incident communications response;
  - Immediate and continuing dissemination of health or safety instructions, if necessary. This may also include evacuation or decontamination instructions;
  - Coordination of initial Federal announcements regarding an incident with State, local, and tribal authorities to ensure that the public is receiving a consistent message;
  - Activation of ESF #15 to support the incident communications effort with appropriate resources;
  - Making available pre-identified subject-matter experts to the media to provide accurate scientific, medical, and technical response information;
  - Designation of a Public Affairs Director to support the PFO, if one is designated;
  - Establishment of a JIC to support the JFO and ICS;
  - Designation of a Public Information Officer (PIO) to coordinate field-level Federal public information and manage the JIC;
  - Dissemination of information to the public on reassurance that authorities are implementing response and recovery actions to ensure the health, safety, and security of the public;
  - Communications to other, nonaffected States about incident details, preparedness measures, and reassurance;
  - Deployment of public affairs resources from other Federal departments and agencies as required by the scope of the incident; and
  - Development and implementation of a joint sustaining communications plan and effort by Federal, State, and local authorities.

- **Recovery:** Incident communications and public affairs efforts are sustained as long as necessary to continually reassure, inform, and respond to public information needs. These efforts are closely coordinated with State, local, and tribal authorities. Recovery programs include mitigation components designed to avoid damage from future incidents. Typical recovery actions for incident communications with the public may include:
  - Providing public information on incident response and progress in restoring normalcy. Emphasis is placed on mitigating or reducing social and emotional anxiety and concern;
  - Providing public information on disaster assistance and support resources; and
  - Recognition of the efforts of responders, citizens, and the private sector.

#### **Incident Action Special Considerations**

- **Objectives:** Communication objectives during an Incident of National Significance are focused on delivering information regarding incident facts, health and safety, preparedness, and response/recovery activity and instructions. Citizens are reassured that authorities are executing coordinated response plans and are provided with frequent updates on incident facts and important instructions. Throughout all phases of incident management, public confidence and credibility must be maintained, particularly if WMD are involved or threatened.
- **Coordination Strategy:** A critical element in building a successful strategy among Federal, State, local, and tribal incident communications leaders is to reach consensus as soon as possible on the coordination and synchronization of incident communications with the public. State, local, and tribal authorities take a lead incident communications role within their respective jurisdictions, while the Federal core group coordinates communications covering Federal assistance to the affected area, Federal departmental/agency response, national preparations, protective measures, impact on nonaffected areas, and Federal law enforcement activities. Mutual agreement and maintenance of this relationship remains a high priority throughout the incident.
- **Messaging Considerations:** Incidents of National Significance place a large demand on normal public affairs processes and organizations. Advance planning, pre-incident coordination and mutual awareness, and exercises all serve to mitigate this. However, public affairs professionals must take into account the following:
  - **Developing the Message:** The nature of an incident and restrictions it may create could inhibit the ability of the Federal, State, local, and tribal incident communications team to develop a communications strategy and message. This could include loss of communications or transportation restrictions. This could also be exacerbated if relocation by participating departments and agencies is required.
  - **Delivering the Message:** Message delivery during an Incident of National Significance may require use of all available communications media and resources. Development of aggressive and creative solutions when traditional tools of communication are not available should be assessed and planned for throughout the incident.
  - **Receiving the Message:** The public, especially those who require evacuation or other guidance, must have the capability to receive the message. This may be difficult if the affected area has suffered significant loss of normal power or personal and mass communications capability. The ability of the public to receive messages and instructions must be considered throughout an incident, and be made known to incident management leadership on a recurrent basis so that appropriate delivery mechanisms and resources are implemented.

- **Risk Communications:** Professionals who support this annex should be trained and conversant in risk communications and employ its major principles during incident management.
- **Information Security:** An Incident of National Significance or other domestic emergency may involve classified or sensitive information. Public information and public education efforts in support of Incidents of National Significance and major domestic incidents must be conducted using the proper protocol and procedures for handling of classified or sensitive information. Operational leadership and the communications team must take into account the security of classified and sensitive law enforcement information, together with the responsibility to provide the public with critical emergency information and protective action guidance.
- **Rumors and Misinformation:** The incident communication core group and JIC use media monitoring, community relations reports, and other techniques to identify rumors, misinformation, inaccurate reports, or other potential issues. The core group and JIC provide a rapid-response capability to research problems, develop an aggressive communications strategy, and ensure dissemination of accurate information to minimize the potential for release of conflicting information and potential for panic or loss of public confidence.
- **Scientific/Medical Support and Messaging:** Public information must be correct and consistent with scientific and medical recommendations. The core group and JIC must rapidly translate complex scientific and medical processes into public information, statements for senior officials, and instructions that can be readily absorbed by the media or acted on by the public. The immediate involvement of agency subject-matter experts is critical to ensure effective, accurate, and timely incident communications with the public.
- **Nonaffected Areas:** Instructions are provided to nonaffected areas to enhance preparedness and minimize the impact on health and safety of those in potentially threatened areas.
- **HSAS:** The core group and JIC incorporates threat status information within messaging as appropriate. To that end, if a level is increased, it is appropriate to cite protective measures being put in place to better protect the Nation, a particular region, and citizens.
- **Public Alerting and Mass Communications Systems:** These systems provide near-immediate capability to warn or instruct the public on natural, manmade, or terrorist incidents. Subject to the availability of power and normal utilities, they provide a key mass communications resource for national leadership to employ during an incident. They may employ tools to reach the broadest audience including mass communications media, Web, other electronic means, and nontraditional resources.
- **Spokespersons:** Spokespersons are identified as early in the incident response process as possible. Spokespersons may include incident management leadership and public affairs professionals. Federal, State, local, and tribal incident communications with the public must ensure that spokespersons are fully prepared with current information and incident facts, incident messages, and incident management roles and responsibilities. Scientific, technical, and medical experts should be identified and available for briefings and interviews throughout the incident. These experts are critical to ensuring that a message is clearly transmitted into common terms and is received by the audience with credibility.
- **Multilanguage Communications:** The incident communications team ensures that non-English-speaking populations in both affected and nonaffected areas receive the same incident information and public instructions. This should be considered throughout the course of the incident. The ESF #15 coordination team, through community relations and other resources, has a prominent role in meeting this requirement.
- **Web Site Coordination:** DHS Public Affairs frequently updates its Web site during an Incident of National Significance. Pre-incident development of incident-related Web pages



expedites posting. It is essential that Federal, State, local, and tribal incident communications staffs frequently review Web site material to ensure consistency and accuracy in the unified message. Federal departments and agencies ensure that Web pages documenting incident activity are appropriately linked to the DHS Web site and posted language is consistent with approved public affairs guidance.

- **Preparedness:** Preparedness communications guidance and messaging support is provided through a number of resources, including:
  - **Web Sites:** The DHS Web site, ready.gov, and Web sites from DOE, HHS, NRC, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other Federal departments and agencies provide authoritative and scientifically based information on threats, health preparedness, and recovery-phase actions.
  - **Technical Experts:** Interviews with subject-matter experts, technical experts, and nongovernmental authorities can summarize incident issues in layman's terms. These subject-matter experts are made available to the news media to provide fact-based information and objective analysis of an incident and related issues.
  - **Public Service Announcements:** Subject to the nature of the Incident of National Significance, DHS Public Affairs may develop and distribute national public service announcements to educate and reassure the public about an incident and related medical or preparedness concerns.
- **Response:** General planning guidance for incident communications with the public is contained in Table 1 at the end of this annex. This matrix reflects incident actions and commensurate incident communications response activities for a nonspecific Incident of National Significance. Key communications phase activities are summarized.
- **Recovery:** Incident communications with the public during recovery, which include the range

of comprehensive DHS/Emergency Preparedness and Response/Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS/EPR/FEMA), other Federal, and State and local community relations efforts, are directed at assisting victims and their families, restoring the affected community, and instilling public confidence in the reconstitution of government operations and services.

- **Medical and Mental Health Support:** Federal resources, State and local authorities, the American Red Cross, and other agencies and organizations provide mental health assistance and support to the public following an Incident of National Significance. This includes efforts to mitigate concerns, anxiety, and fear from new attacks or incidents, and to instill public confidence in the capabilities of responders, authorities, and plans.
- Many incidents do not rise to the level of an Incident of National Significance or require the direct involvement by the Secretary of Homeland Security. However, DHS and its OPA may assume responsibility or provide a major role during these domestic incidents when significant interagency coordination is required. Notification, activation, and response processes are discussed in preceding sections of this annex. Communications with the public during major domestic incidents are based on the following activities:
  - DHS Public Affairs assesses the requirements for incident communications with the public in coordination with the HSOC and coordinates Federal public affairs activities for the incident, unless otherwise directed by the Secretary;
  - DHS Public Affairs contacts the affected State, local, and tribal counterparts and, through mutual agreement, confirms primary roles and plans;
  - DHS Public Affairs identifies a core Federal department and agency participant group (usually based on operational participation), and arranges conference calls and coordination; and

- In coordination with participating State, local, and tribal counterparts, the core Federal departmental/agency group develops and delivers public information and instructions. Primary assignments are

determined in accordance with jurisdictional and statutory responsibilities, operational tasks, areas of expertise and responsibility, and the nature and location of the incident.

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## Responsibilities

### Coordinating Agency: DHS

DHS, through the AS/PA and OPA:

- Plans, prepares, and executes Federal leadership and ESF #15 resource management during Incidents of National Significance and other domestic incidents;
- Coordinates plans, processes, and resource support to field operations for incident communications with the public through ESF #15, coordinates incident communications plans and processes with the White House Office of Communications and HSC, and coordinates interagency core group and JIC plans and processes;
- Designates a Public Affairs Director to support the incident PFO, if one is designated;
- Coordinates Federal plans and processes for incident communications with the public with State, local, and tribal authorities as necessary;
- Coordinates plans and processes for incident communications with the public with nongovernmental organizations; and
- Disseminates information related to incidents to the public.

### Federal Departments

Federal departments and independent agencies:

- Plan, prepare, and execute their respective processes for incident communications with the public during potential or actual Incidents of National Significance;

- In conjunction with strategic communications guidance from DHS, assume certain primary agency responsibilities for incident communications with the public when assigned or consistent with specific departmental and agency authorities. For example, the Department of State assumes primary responsibility for public affairs issues during a potential or actual Incident of National Significance which involves another nation, aliens, foreign-owned transportation modes, or international policy issues;
- Disseminate incident information to the public within their functional areas of responsibility; and
- Ensure that departmental and agency plans incorporate the provisions contained in the NRP for incident communications with the public.

### Responsibilities for NRP-ICEPP Administration

Responsibilities for the ongoing management, maintenance, update, and administration of the NRP-ICEPP are assigned as follows:

- **Responsibility:** The DHS AS/PA is responsible for preparation, management, and maintenance of the NRP-ICEPP.
- **Oversight:** The HSC provides oversight and coordination of policy issues relating to the NRP-ICEPP. The HSC and the DHS AS/PA jointly coordinate interagency clearance on the NRP-ICEPP, pending changes, exercise and incident lessons learned, and resolution of interagency coordination issues. Interagency Policy Coordinating Committees review and comment on proposed routine changes to the NRP-ICEPP.

- **Recurrent Review:** The DHS AS/PA reviews the NRP-ICEPP annually. Urgent changes are coordinated through the interagency process in an expeditious manner as necessary throughout the year.
- **Exercises and the National Exercise Program (NEP):** The NRP-ICEPP is the primary Federal plan for incident communications with the public and is to be used for interagency exercises and those scheduled within the NEP.
- **Incident Communications Public Affairs Coordination Committee (ICPACC):** The ICPACC is a Federal interagency contact group incorporating public affairs representatives from all Cabinet departments and independent agencies to increase awareness, teamwork, and interoperability among Federal incident communications staffs. The ICPACC is not charged to conduct formal policy review, but may assess interagency issues process matters dealing with the Public Affairs Support Annex. The DHS AS/PA manages the ICPACC.

TABLE 1. Interagency Incident Communications Planning Guide

<b>INTERAGENCY INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING GUIDE</b> <b>INCIDENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE – RESPONSE PHASE</b>		
<b>Incident Time</b>	<b>Incident Activity</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>First Hour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incident</li> <li>▪ First official reports</li> <li>▪ Unconfirmed facts and rumors</li> <li>▪ First media reports</li> <li>▪ Potential live TV reports</li> <li>▪ Public has immediate need for information and possible health and safety instructions</li> <li>▪ Media has immediate need for facts, information, and subject-matter experts</li> <li>▪ Witness media reports</li> <li>▪ Victim family reports</li> <li>▪ Potential incident video</li> <li>▪ Unconfirmed casualty reports</li> <li>▪ Potential voluntary or directed evacuations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HSOC notified of an incident</li> <li>▪ IIMG activated</li> <li>▪ NRP-ICEPP activated</li> <li>▪ NICCL activated</li> <li>▪ DHS Public Affairs initiates communications path contacts, including contact with incident site</li> <li>▪ Special media line activated</li> <li>▪ State and local authorities may make first releases about the incident</li> <li>▪ Initial health and safety release</li> <li>▪ Emergency Alert System may be activated</li> <li>▪ NOAA Weather Radio may be used to broadcast warning information</li> <li>▪ Interagency NICCL assesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Control/leads</li> <li>▪ Coordination/planning</li> <li>▪ Communications, first release</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Initial strategy for incident communications with the public developed by interagency core group; focuses on Federal incident response, protective measures, and reassurance</li> <li>▪ Secretary of Homeland Security and/or other senior officials make first formal announcements</li> <li>▪ State and local authorities in affected area(s) lead incident site communications while Federal and interagency effort focuses on support to affected area and national issues</li> <li>▪ DHS initiates contact with nonaffected State incident communications officials</li> <li>▪ Splash Web page posted by DHS; links to other interagency Web sites</li> <li>▪ Subject-matter experts identified to media</li> <li>▪ Federal Government status announcement from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OPM when the affected area includes the National Capital Region (NCR)</li> <li>▪ Federal Executive Boards outside the NCR</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

TABLE 1. Interagency Incident Communications Planning Guide (Continued)

<b>INTERAGENCY INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING GUIDE</b> <b>INCIDENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE – RESPONSE PHASE</b>		
<b>Incident Time</b>	<b>Incident Activity</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>First Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continuing heavy media coverage</li> <li>▪ Media questions on the new alert status (if changed) and safety of the Nation and citizens</li> <li>▪ Response and recovery continues</li> <li>▪ Potential rumors</li> <li>▪ Continuing victim and family coverage in media</li> <li>▪ Search and rescue operations</li> <li>▪ Possible decontamination issues</li> <li>▪ Delivery of medicines, as appropriate</li> <li>▪ Arrival of supporting Federal resources, including PFO, medical, incident response, law enforcement, and incident communications with the public</li> <li>▪ Questions from media on why the incident happened and potential incidents elsewhere in the Nation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interagency effort continues to focus on Federal incident response, protective measures, and reassurance; messaging includes deterrent measures, preparedness, and disaster assistance</li> <li>▪ HSAS level changed if necessary and protective measures incorporated in interagency plan for incident communications with the public</li> <li>▪ DHS Public Affairs continues close coordination with HSOC</li> <li>▪ Statements by national leadership</li> <li>▪ JIC established to support JFO and incorporate Federal, State, and local authorities; JIC performs functions per NIMS</li> <li>▪ ESF #15 is activated and employed to coordinate resources for incident communications with the public</li> <li>▪ Daily briefing routine established in coordination with all Federal, State, and local authorities</li> <li>▪ PFO Public Affairs Director designated and deployed</li> <li>▪ Participating Federal departments and agencies publish supporting releases in accordance with interagency plan</li> <li>▪ Messaging addresses potential medical or health safety instructions</li> <li>▪ DHS Public Affairs coordinates preparation and distribution of nationally televised public service and health advisories</li> <li>▪ Federal and other Web pages updated, coordinated, and linked</li> <li>▪ JIC distributes statistical information, graphics, video, and photos as appropriate</li> </ul>

TABLE 1. Interagency Incident Communications Planning Guide (Continued)

<b>INTERAGENCY INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING GUIDE</b> <b>INCIDENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE – RESPONSE TO RECOVERY PHASES</b>		
<b>Incident Time</b>	<b>Incident Activity</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>First Week</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Response and recovery continues</li> <li>▪ Potential diminishing media coverage</li> <li>▪ Continuing victim and family coverage</li> <li>▪ Search and rescue operations</li> <li>▪ Possible decontamination issue</li> <li>▪ Disaster recovery, assistance support, and effectiveness of government and responder efforts</li> <li>▪ Delivery of medicines, as appropriate</li> <li>▪ Continued deployment and progress of supporting Federal resources, including medical, incident response, law enforcement, and incident communications with the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interagency effort continues to focus on Federal incident response, protective measures, and reassurance; messaging includes deterrent measures, preparedness, and disaster assistance</li> <li>▪ Daily briefing routine continues in coordination with all Federal, State, and local authorities</li> <li>▪ DHS Public Affairs continues close coordination with HSOC</li> <li>▪ JIC supports JFO; JIC performs standard functions and coordinates with PFO Public Affairs Director</li> <li>▪ ESF #15 resource coordination continues</li> <li>▪ Federal participating departments and agencies continue to release supporting updates in accordance with interagency plan</li> <li>▪ DHS Public Affairs coordinates nationally televised public service and health advisories</li> <li>▪ Subject-matter experts continue to be made available</li> <li>▪ Federal and other Web pages updated, coordinated, and linked</li> <li>▪ JIC distributes statistical information, graphics, video, and photos as appropriate</li> <li>▪ Potential VIP visits to incident</li> </ul>

TABLE 1. Interagency Incident Communications Planning Guide (Continued)

<b>INTERAGENCY INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING GUIDE</b> <b>INCIDENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE – RECOVERY PHASE</b>		
<b>Incident Time</b>	<b>Incident Activity</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>Recovery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Media coverage greatly diminished</li> <li>▪ Potential formal investigations</li> <li>▪ Emphasis on victims, cause of the incident, and effectiveness of response and recovery effort</li> <li>▪ Identification of personal stories and special situations</li> <li>▪ Impact of incident on the nonaffected States and society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Federal interagency effort focuses on plan recovery, and support and assistance to victims and affected populations</li> <li>▪ ESF #15 resource coordination continues</li> <li>▪ Preparedness measures and readiness to manage follow-on incidents</li> <li>▪ JIC continues to provide briefings with Federal, State, and local team to support recovery plan</li> <li>▪ JIC continues to document and release information on plan execution, recovery efforts, and disaster recovery assistance</li> <li>▪ Responders identified for recognition</li> </ul>

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